DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 979 SO 012 526

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TITLE NTHEP Preliminary Report: The Hull Site. A Nineteenth Century Narragansett Homestead in Charlestown, Rhode Island.

INSTITUTION Narraganset Tribal Education Project, Inc., Charleston, R.I.

SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Ethnic Heritage Studies Branch.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 36p.: For a related document, see SO 012 527. Appendices removed from original document due to poor reproducibility.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Culture: *American Indian Studies: *Archaeology: Ceramics: *Cultural Background: Cultural Education: *Field Experience Programs: Secondary Education: Summer Programs: United States History
IDENTIFIERS Ethnic Heritage Studies Program Act: *Narragansett (Tribe); New England

ABSTRACT

The document describes a summer archaeological excavation experience undertaken by seven Narragansett Indian high school students as a continuation of the Narragansett Tribe Ethnic Heritage Program (SO 012 527). Directed by an archeologist, the students researched written records, interviewed older members of the Narragansett Tribe, and received instruction in archaeological techniques. Objectives were to determine the dates of occupation and the function of major features of the site, to recover artifacts which would explain the culture of Narragansett Indian families in the 19th century New England life. The report describes the Hull site and its ownership history and summarizes archival, excavation, and laboratory techniques. The major part of the document details the results of the excavation by area and excavation unit, including maps and drawings of the dig and special features and artifact descriptions. Results of a preliminary analysis of the findings indicate that further analysis will supplement and possibly challenge previous research on 19th century New England sites; in that the dimensions of the two principle features are unusual, the time lag reflected in the ceramics raises questions about the validity of the Mean Ceramic Data Formula, and there is little documentary evidence about Narragansett culture in the 19th century. (CK)

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PRELIMINARY REPORT: THE HULL SITE
A NINETEENTH CENTURY NARRAGANSETT HOMESTEAD
IN CHARLESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND

SP 012 526

KATHLEEN J. BRAGDON

NTHEP ARCHAEOLOGIST

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Preface. Excavations at the Hull Site, as a continuation of the Narragansett Tribe Ethnic Heritage Program, provided several high-school students with an opportunity to participate actively in uncovering unknown aspects of their Tribal history.

Investigations at the Hull Site were supplemental to instruction recieved by the students at Chariho Regional High School and South Kingston High School during the previous school year.

The seven students chosen from classes on Tribal History at Chariho Regional High School and South Kingston High School continued their classroom training during the summer by searching the written records concerning the occupants of the excavation site, and by talking to older Tribal members about past life among the Narragansetts. In addition, the students received instruction in archaeological techniques.

The Hull Site project thus provided both an opportunity to investigate a unique and interesting archaeological site, as well as a valuable educational experience for the students. Any questions concerning the site may be addressed to the Narragansett Tribal Council, or to myself.

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Matthew Thomas	Field Worker (7 wks)
Keela Perry	Field Worker (3 wks)

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Leonard Loparto	Cartographer

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I. Introduction.

Excavations at the Hull Site, part of the Narragansett Tribe Ethnic Heritage Project, have provided valuable information concerning the lives of Narragansett families in the 19th century. Paucity of written records concerning these people makes the data derived from the Hull Site more informative. In addition, the study of the material culture assemblage from the occupation site of members of a distinct socio-cultural group can serve to supplement and to challenge previous research and assumptions concerning 19th century New England life.

II. Description of the Site and Present Site Use.

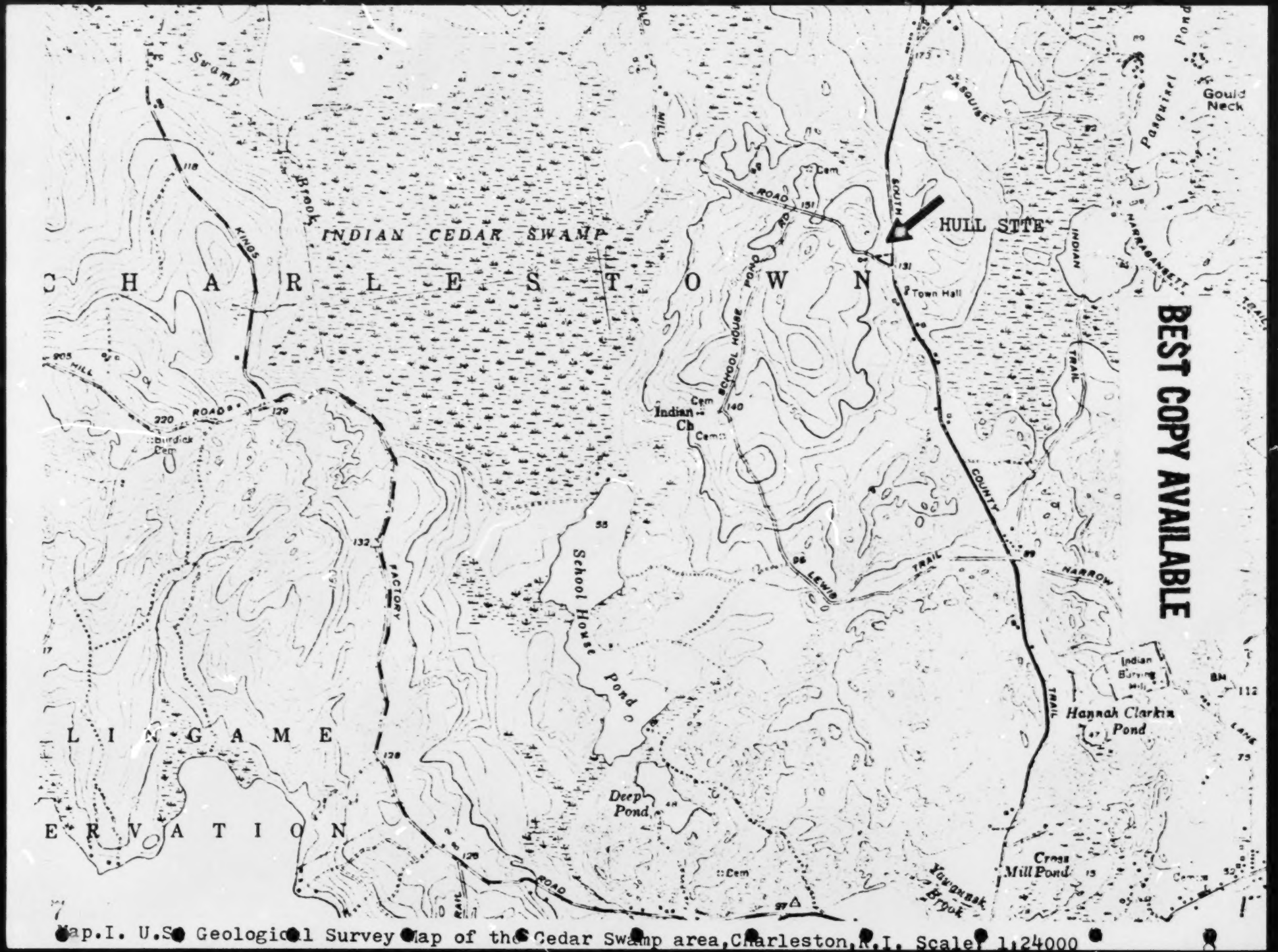
The Hull Site is located at the intersection of Route 2(R.I.) and Saw Mill Road (See Map I). According to the deed of the present owners, the property on which the site is located in the Town of Charlestown, County of Washington and State of Rhode Island, bounded and described as follows,

> Northerly, by land formerly of Matilda Congdon; easterly, by the State Highway, commonly known as "South County Trail," southerly and westerly by the Town Highway, commonly known as "Saw Mill Road,". . . Said tract also being shown as "D.Hull" on map of Indian Reservation, Town of Charlestown, Rhode Island," on file in the Town Clerk's Office, said Town of Charestown.(CD:45:17).

Presently, the site is not occupied, and is overgrown with low shrubs and trees.

III. History of Site Ownership.

The earliest known occupants of the Hull Site were



Map.I. U.S. Geological Survey Map of the Cedar Swamp area, Charleston, R.I. Scale 1:24000

Daniel Hull (whose name appears on the map of the Reservation on file at the Charlestown Town Clerk's Office), and his wife Emily Lewis Hull. Daniel Hull sold part of the property to George Beese in March of 1886, although Emily Hull still held land nearest to the highway. That same year, Emily Hull auctioned part of her property, which was bought by Edward S. Cone. In 1887 the land was resold to Emily Hull.

In 1911, Emily Hull, who had since married Edward S. Cone, sold the property on which the Hull Site is located, to William Pulley. He in turn sold the land to William and Clara Peckham in 1922 (CD:20:165-166). The land then passed through inheritance to their daughters, Mary Coggeshall and Clara Addison, who sold it to Julian and Beatrice Andrews in 1963 (CD:39:82).

In 1969, the Andrews' sold the property to Julian Andrews and Carl G. Hagstrom, the present owners (CD:45:17).

IV. Summary of Research Objectives.

In addition to the educational role played by the excavation in the Narragansett Tribe Ethnic Heritage Project, the investigations at the Hull Site were conducted in order to answer several research questions. First, it was hoped that the dates of occupation of the site could be determined, and that the function of the two major features on the Hull Site could be detected.

Second, it was expected that the artifacts recovered from the excavation would shed some light on the material culture and lifeways of Narragansett Indian families in the 19th century.

Finally, the information derived from analysis of the Hull Site assemblage was expected to supplement previous knowledge about 19th century New England life, particularly among the Narragansett Indians.

V. Summary of Archival, Excavation and Laboratory Techniques.

In order to achieve the above objectives, a thorough search of the public records relating to the property was conducted. Results of the deed search are summarized in Section III, above. Interviews with local residents were carried out, and local histories were consulted.

The site itself was divided into three areas, each of which was tested separately. Each area was divided into a meter-square grid, running off a N-S/E-W baseline. Each excavation unit took the designation of its NE stake (See Maps II and III).

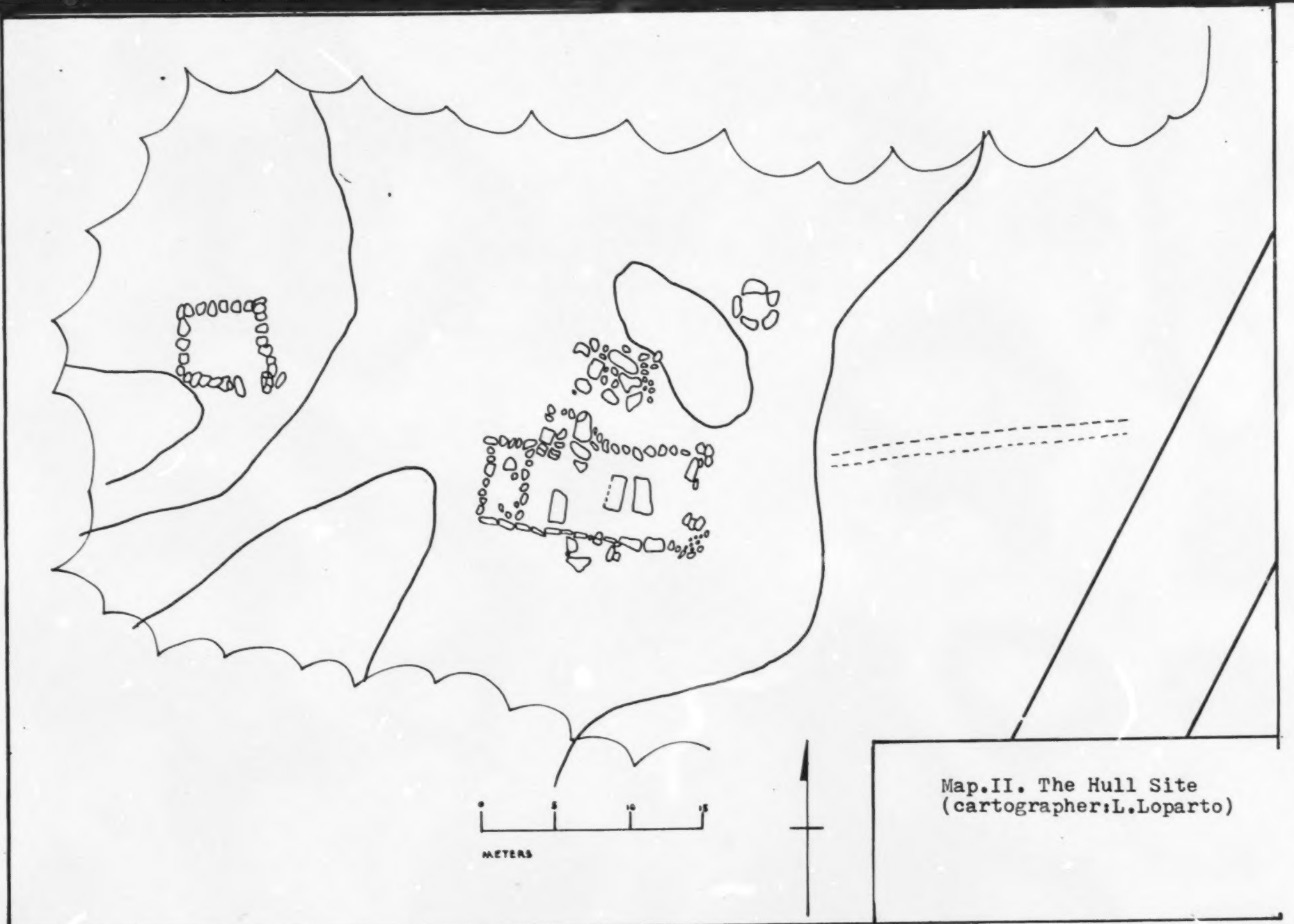
Each unit was excavated by natural levels, and the features were excavated as separate units.

Artifacts were bagged by excavation unit, level and date of excavation. All artifacts were washed, numbered and catalogued, and are now stored at the Narragansett Longhouse in Charlestown, R.I.

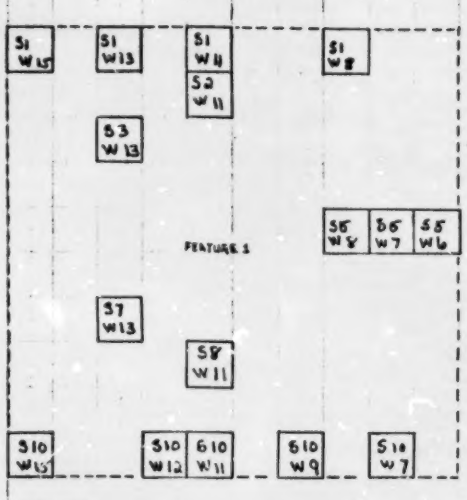
VI. Summary of Excavations by Area and Excavation Unit.

(See Appendices for photographs of excavation units, artifacts, and Bag Inventory Sheets)

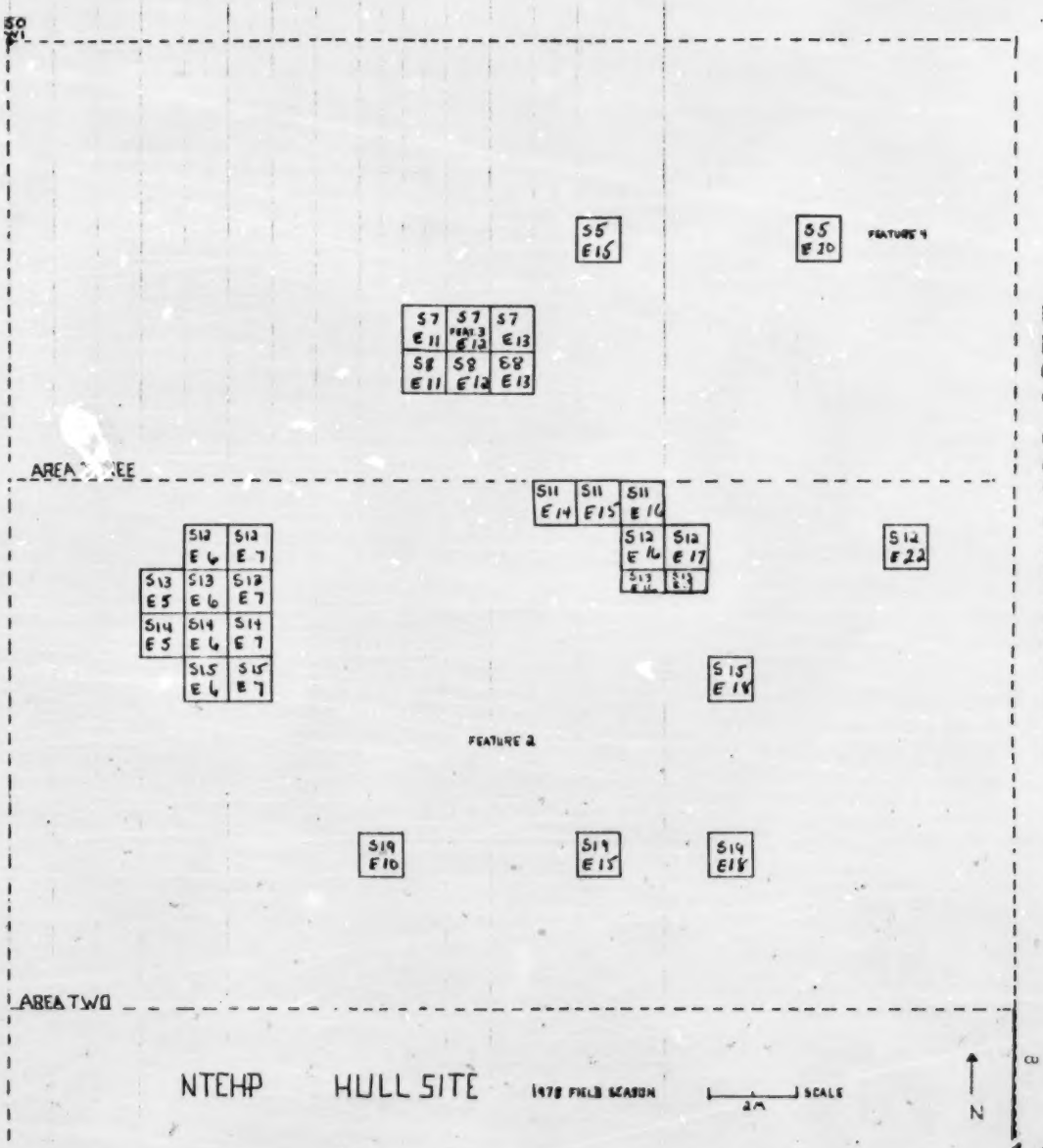
A. Area One. Excavation units for area one were chosen by random sampling, and some discretionary pits were excavated as



Map.II. The Hull Site
(cartographer:L.Loparto)



Map. III. The Hull Site
Excavation Units



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well. Feature I, a dry-laid stone cellar hole, was excavated as a separate unit,(See Maps II,III and Figure I). Results of excavations in Area One by excavation unit, are as follows:

$S_1W_{15,13,11,8}$, S_2W_{11}, and S_3W_{13}. Excavations in the six northernmost units within Area One revealed very few artifacts; three fragments of pearlware in S_1W_{13} and in S_1W_8, and one fragment of hard white ware in S_1W_8, as well as two machine cut nails in S_2W_{11}. The stratigraphy at the northern end of Area One consisted of two basic soil types: an upper layer of dark brown loam, and a lower layer of orange,sandy clay. In some units, the loam layer was capped by a thin accumulation of organic debris. (See Figures II,III).

$S_5W_{8,7,6}$. This trench, extending from the eastern wall of Feature I, produced large quantities of creamware and pearlware, as well as a few fragments of bottle and window glass. The stratigraphy revealed by the trench is similar to that found in the previously mentioned units (See Figure IV).

S_7W_{13}. Although near the Southwestern corner of Feature I, this excavation unit revealed very little artifactual material. However, the artifacts recovered included two fragments of yellow-ware, and a tiny blue glass bead. This unit also contained a larger overburden of organic debris than did the units in the northern portions of Area One.(See Figure V).

S_8W_{11}. This unit produced only one fragment of creamware, and one of pearlware.

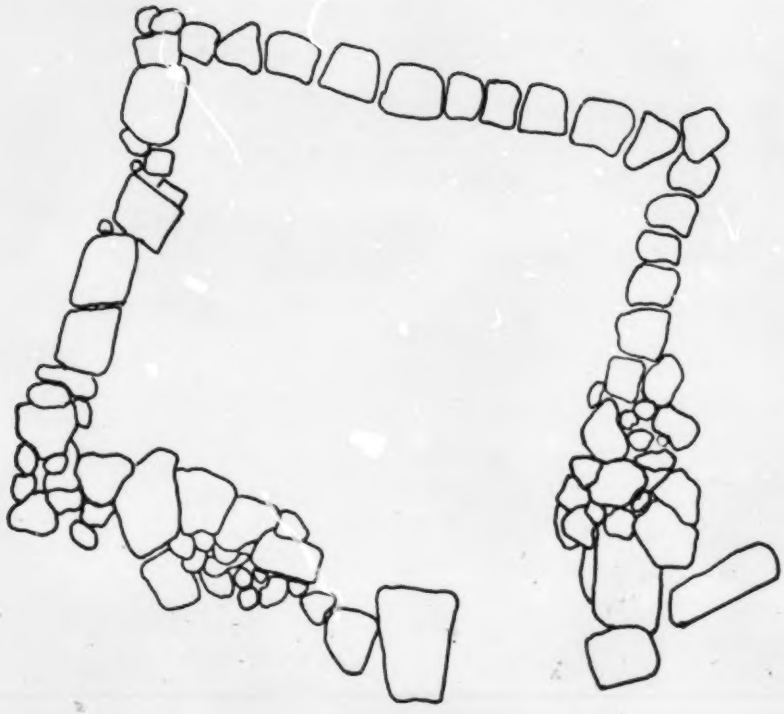

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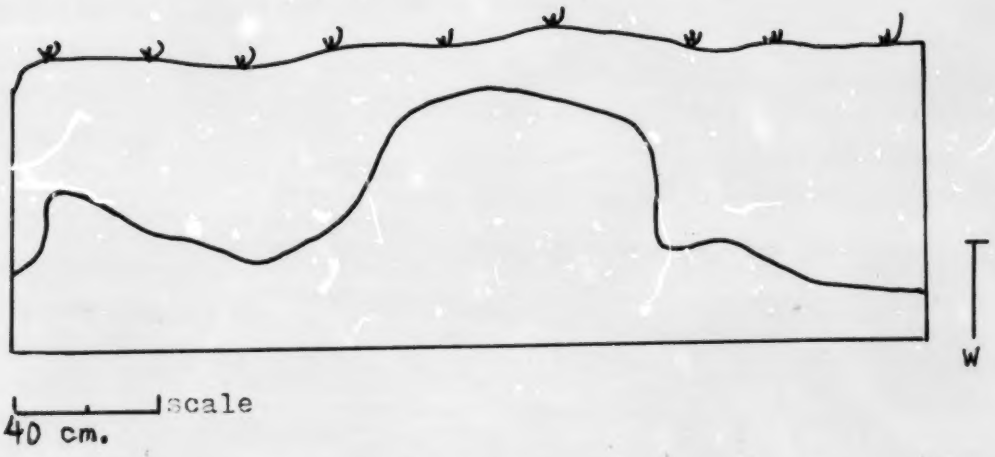
FIGURE I: FEATURE I



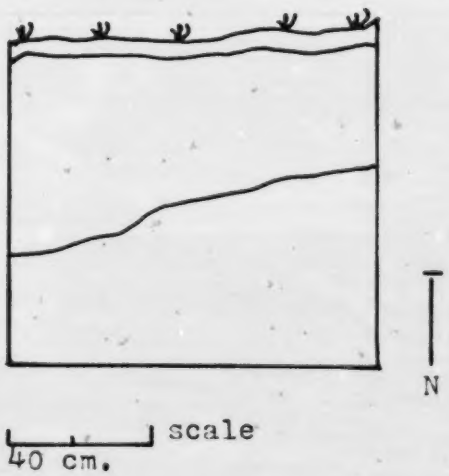


FIGURE II: S1 S2 W11

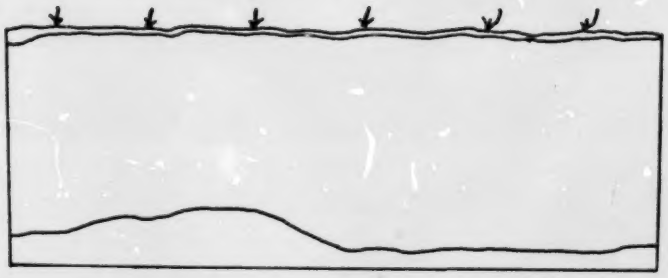


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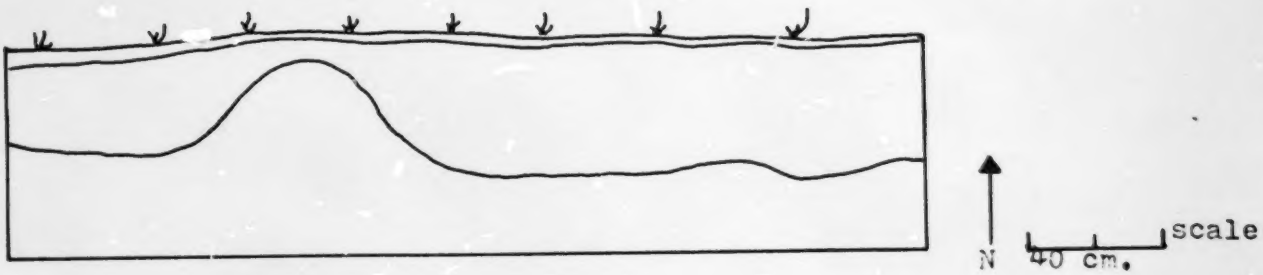
FIGURE III: S1 W8



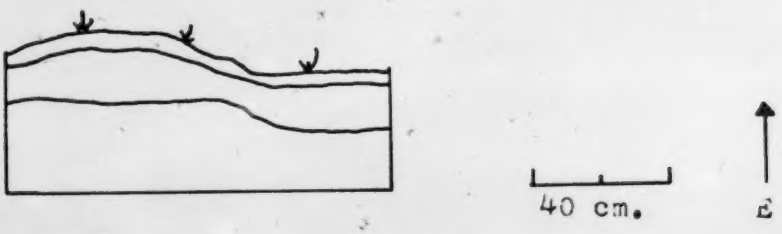
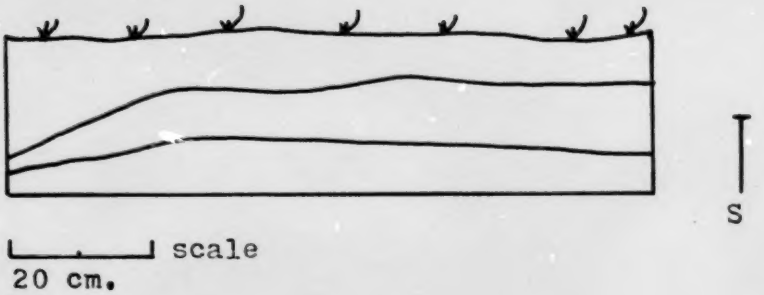


FIGURE IV: S 5 W 6,7,8



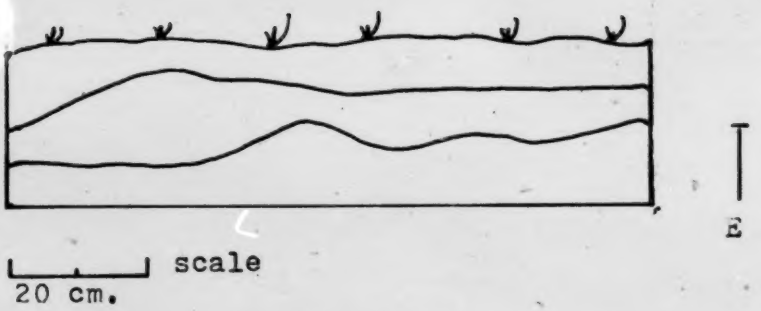


FIGURE V: S7 W13

$S_{10}W15,12,11,9,7$. The southernmost excavation units in Area One contained large amounts of creamware, particularly in $S_{10}W7$, and bottle glass, notably in $S_{10}W11,12$.

The stratigraphy in the southern half of Area One is similar to that in the northern portion of the Area (See Figures VI,VII).

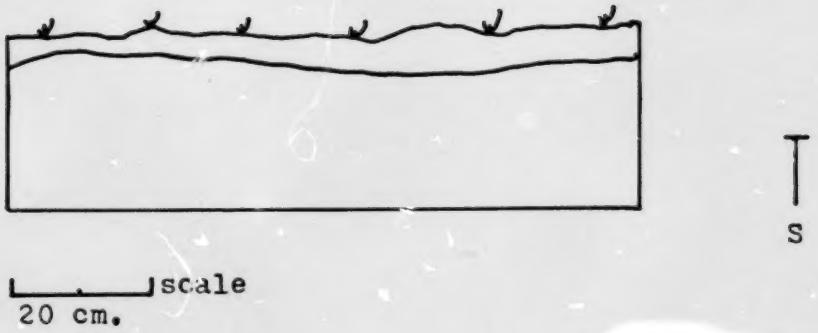
Feature I.

a. Fill. The fill of Feature I, a dry-laid stone cellar hole, was a mixture of soil, cobbles, artifacts and debris. Several metal and leather artifacts were recovered from the fill, including two hoe blades, a pail, a drawer pull, and at least two shoes. Ceramics discovered in the fill included relatively large amounts of hard white ware.

b. Foundations. The area around the foundations of Feature I was cleared to determine the thickness of the walls, and to uncover any traces of footings or trenches. No such traces were discovered, but a moderate number of artifacts was retrieved. The artifacts included many fragments of bottle glass, and sherds of creamware, pearlware and hard white ware, in order of increasing proportions.

B. Area Two.

Due to time constraints, Area Two was not sampled randomly, but rather, discretionary pits were placed in areas most likely to provide information on the dating of the structure represented by Feature II.(See Figure VIII). The results



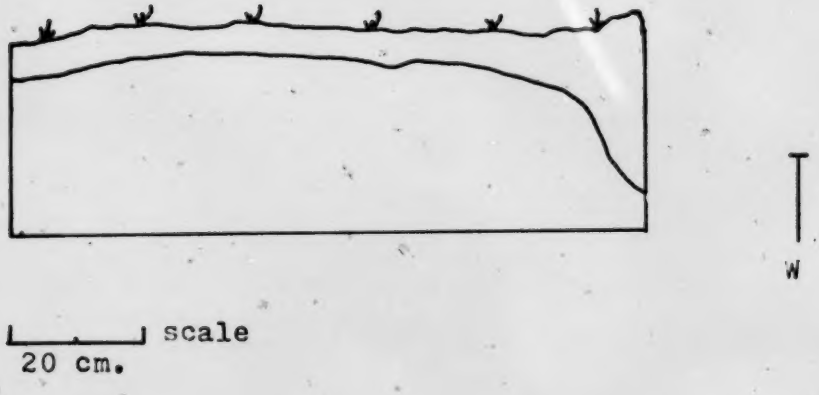
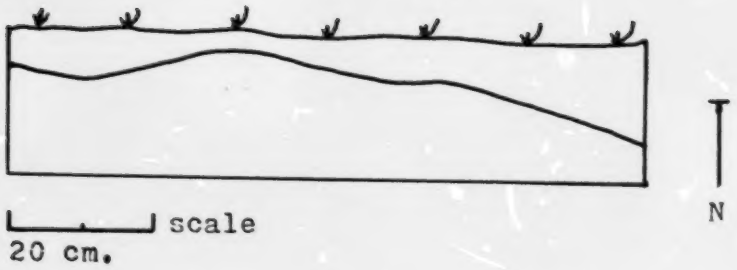


FIGURE VI: S10 W9



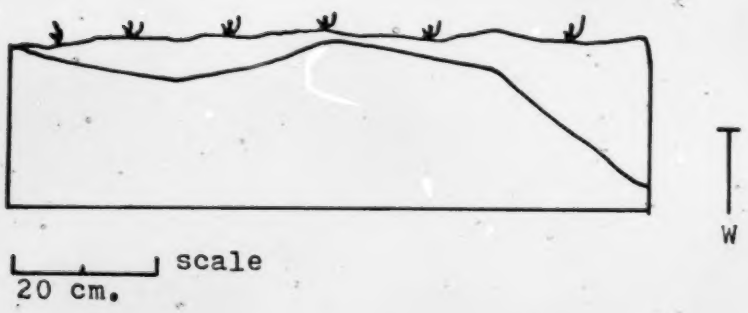


FIGURE VII: S10 W7

FIGURE VIII: FEATURE II

of excavation of the units in Area Two are as follows:

Area Two Surface. Initial clearing of the surface of Area Two produced a collection of metal objects including a hinge, a door handle and latch, as well as 17 fragments of pearlware, 7 of hard white ware and 1 of creamware. Scattered fragments of domestic stoneware and pharmaceutical porcelain, as well as a fairly large quantity of window and bottle glass, were also recovered from the surface.

S12 E 6-7,S13 E 5,6,7, S 14 E 5,6,7 and S15 E 6,7. This large unit was cleared only to the level of the first concentration of stones, in an attempt to trace the outlines of the footing stones of Feature II.(See Figure VIII). Nevertheless, several significant artifacts were recovered, including a cock from a flint lock gun, hinges, large quantities of machine cut nails, bottle glass, and a relatively large number of pearlware fragments.

S11 E14,15,16, S12 E16,17 and S13 E16,17. The area of excavation covered by these units appears to have been near an entrance to the structure represented by Feature II. The large number of artifacts recovered from this section suggests that it may have been an area of broadcast trash disposal. The artifacts included large quantities of shell, relatively large numbers of pearlware fragments, but also included fragments of hard white ware, creamware, stoneware, red ware and pharmaceutical porcelain. Buttons, a pewter spoon, a porcelain spoon bowl, a wooden pail, and bottle glass were also found.

Soil within these units was mainly dark organic loam, with little of the orange sandy soil appearing (See Figure IX).

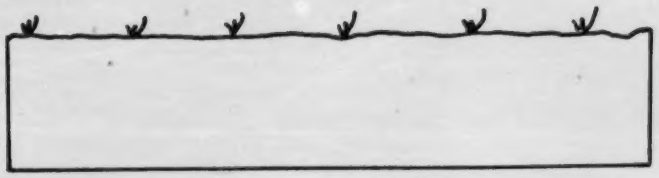
S12 E22. This unit was excavated in order to sample the NE portion of Area II. Very few artifacts were recovered from this unit; it contained only three fragments of hard white ware, one of stoneware, and three of pearlware, along with one fragment of windowglass.

S15 E18. This unit represents another area near an entrance to the structure represented by Feature II. This entrance appears to have been a bulkhead associated with the small cellar hole in the eastern half of the Feature (See Figure VIII). A large number of artifacts were recovered from this area, including several fragments of pearlware, hard white ware and creamware, along with buttons, bottleglass, roof slate, shell, bone, nails and a wine glass bowl fragment.

The stratigraphy of this unit was similar to that found in Area One, with a thin layer of organic debris over brown loam, which in turn capped a layer of orange sandy clay. (See Figure X).

S19 E 10,15,18. Only one of the three southernmost units in Area Two, S19 E 18, revealed significant artifactual material. This included a large proportion of hard white ware, and bottleglass.

The profiles of 19S E15 and 18 reveal no layer of organic debris, and a thick layer of brown loam (See Figures XI,XII). These profiles resemble those found near the north foundation of Feature II.



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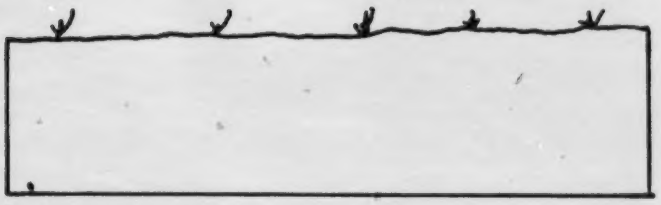

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FIGURE IX: S11 E16, S12 E16 and S12 E17

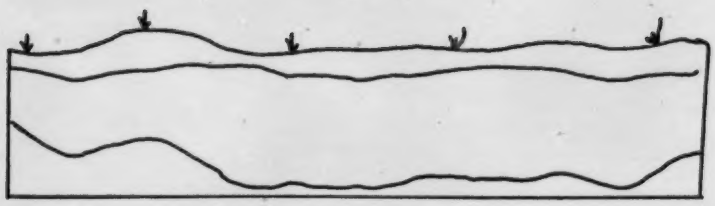

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FIGURE X: S15 E18

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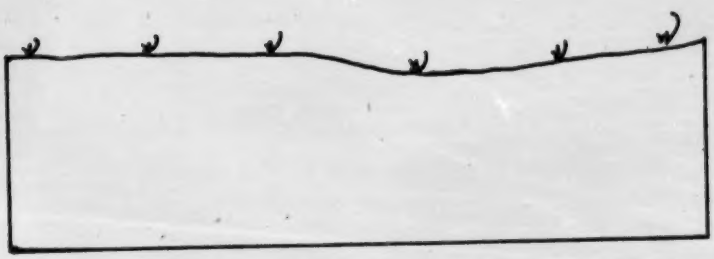
Figure XI: S 19 E15



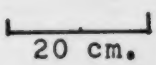
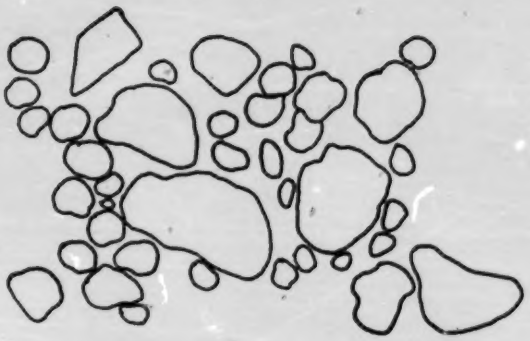
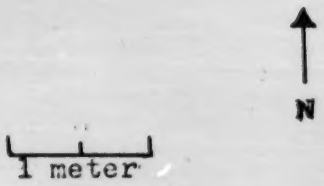
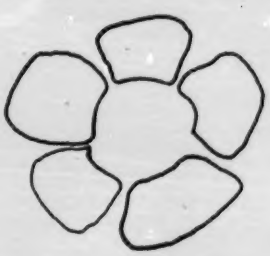


FIGURE XII: S19 E18







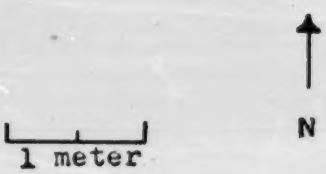


FIGURE XIII: FEATURES III,IV

Feature II Cellar Hole Fill. In clearing the cellar hole of Feature II, in order to determine the dire c tion of its footing stones, a few artifacts were uncovered, including several fragments of pearlware, machine cut nails and bottle glass.

C. Area Three. Area Three includes two features, III and IV, (See Map III and Figure XIII). These features were cleared and two test pits were placed near them, to determine their date of construction.

S7 E 11,12,13 and S8 E11,12,13, and S5 E15. (Feature III). This feature appeared to be roughly oval concentration of stones. In the process of removing these stones, several artifacts were recovered, including fragments of hard white ware, windowglass, and miscellaneous metal fragments.

S5 E20.(Feature IV). Feature IV is a well, still holding water, and originally covered with two flat stones. Surface collection around the feature, and excavation of S5 E 20 produced only two artifacts, both fragments of bottle glass.

VII. Interpretations. One of the initial research objectives of the project was to determine the dates during which the Hull Site was occupied. Using Stanley South's Mean Ceramic Date Formula on the ceramics from Features I and II at the Hull Site generated the following mean dates for each feature:

Feature I: 1816

Feature II: 1834

Since the earliest known date of occupation for the Hull site is 1860, these dates raise the possibility that there was

earlier, unrecorded occupation of the site.

Another possibility is that the artifacts from the Hull Site reflect the "time lag" noted by Deetz for another site occupied by freed Black slaves in 19th century Plymouth, Massachusetts (Deetz 1977:146-147).

As to the nature of the two features, oral tradition states that the small structure (Feature I) was occupied first, and later, after the early structure burned, the second structure (Feature II) was built and occupied. Although little evidence of burning was found associated with Feature I, the dates generated by application of the Mean Ceramic Date formula (South 1978:72) to the Hull Site ceramics support a slightly earlier date of occupation for the smaller structure.

However, the small size of Feature I, and the fact that there were no visible remains of a chimney associated with this structure, might also indicate that Feature I was actually an outbuilding connected with the larger structure.

VIII. Conclusions. This report represents only the results of preliminary analysis, and cannot be considered conslusive. It is clear from the material presented here however, that furthur analysis will provide information which will supplement and possibly challenge previous research on 19th century New England sites.

First, the dimensions of the two principle features on the Hull Site, are unusual. Feature measures approximately 14x 15 feet (See Figure I), while Feature II is divided into at least three small rooms, one 10x15, one 16x15 and one 15x15(See Figure XIII). Furthur research is planned to determine how characteristic

these dimensions were for other Narragansett homesteads in the 19th century, and how these compare with Anglo-American homestead sites of the same period.

Second, the "time lag," reflected in the ceramics from the Hull Site raises several questions about the validity of the Mean Ceramic Date Formula for sites occupied by non-Euro-Americans.

Finally, evidence from the Hull Site provides information concerning Narragansett lifeways in the 19th century, a period about which there is very little documentary evidence. The potential yield of data from such a site is therefore greater than for sites in other areas of Rhode Island and Massachusetts for which more documentary evidence is available.

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